

Knowsley Child and Family Poverty Plan 2015-18

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Foreword

In 2011 we published the first child poverty development plan for Knowsley which set out an ambitious shared vision to reduce the number of children in the borough experiencing poverty, and ensure that all children are given the same chances to succeed in life. The time is now right to refresh our approach and establish a new child poverty plan for Knowsley.

We are facing huge challenges in Knowsley. Since 2010 the Government's austerity measures have hit areas like Knowsley the hardest and the 2015 Spending Review indicates that things are only going to get tougher. We remain firmly committed to tackling child and family poverty and maintain a vision to continue to work together to reduce child and family poverty and address the associated symptoms such as inequality in life chances outcomes.

Tackling the cross generational cycle of poverty is essential if we are to deliver our strategic priorities for the borough, and importantly, reduce the impact of poverty on the lives of individuals and families themselves.

We have continued to build on the Liverpool City Region's collaborative approach to tackling child and family poverty and have worked closely with the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission to develop this local approach.

This plan sits within the key strategic framework for children, young people and families in Knowsley and is intended to complement the ambitions of all related strategies and plans. It is our intention that the vision and priorities set out here will provide a common set of priorities within which partners across Knowsley can work collectively to address the challenges, and be reflected in associated plans and strategies.

Child poverty in Knowsley: key facts

- 10,205 children in Knowsley live in poverty (28.9% of all children).
- Child poverty levels in Knowsley are higher than England (18%), and second highest in the Liverpool City Region.
- The number and proportion of children living in poverty in Knowsley has been falling since 2008 (32.8%), but is influenced by a fall in national median income over the same period.
- Four out of five children in poverty live in a single parent family (78%).
- Almost a third (3,240) of children living in poverty are aged under-5.

1. Vision and priorities

“Working together as partners we will reduce child and family poverty and maximise opportunities for children and young people in their life chances. We will achieve this through a dual approach which ensures an ever growing proportion of children and young people are ready for school and life whilst maximising family resources.”

Child and family poverty priorities 2015-18

Fair employment

Birth and school readiness

School interventions, Pupil Premium and young people NEET

Health inequalities and lifestyle choices

Transport and accessibility

What would this mean?

- Barriers to good quality and sustainable employment are removed.
- Parents are able to progress in the workplace and increase their earnings.

- Expectant mothers are healthy and ready to give birth.
- Children from low income families achieve the same level of social and emotional development as other children.
- All children receive high quality early years education and are ready for school.

- Children from low income families have the same opportunity to achieve at school as their peers.
- Young people from low income families have the same opportunities to enter further education, employment or training when they leave school.

- Health inequalities are reduced amongst children.
- Parents make lifestyle choices that are positive towards, and do not harm their children’s health.

- Children from low income families have the same opportunities as all children to access key services.
- Low income families are able to access employment, training and social opportunities.

2. What is child poverty?

There is no overarching definition of child poverty but a child can be considered living in poverty if they live in a household that has insufficient resources to meet the minimum needs of that household (including social participation). This can include things such as clothing, shoes, food, transport, household bills and household items.

There are different ways of measuring child poverty, and the Government's annual Household Below Average Income publication reports two main national measures of child poverty.

- **Absolute child poverty** (proportion of children living in households with income below 60% of median household income of a baseline year 2010/11).
- **Relative child poverty** (proportion of children living in households with income below 60% of current median household income).

Measuring child poverty locally

Locally child poverty is measured as the number of families who receive out of work benefits **or** tax credits (where their income is less than 60% of the national median income).

According to the latest available figures (2013), there are 10,205 children living in poverty in Knowsley, which represents 28.9% of all children living in the borough (higher than the England average of 18%).

Knowsley has the 9th highest proportion of children living in poverty out of all local authorities in England, and the second highest in the Liverpool City Region.

Levels of poverty in Knowsley are not new. There have been significant levels of income inequality for many years, linked to economic stagnation in the north of England, and a growing economic growth imbalance between the South East and the rest of the country.

What does it mean to have a low income?

In terms of the family income, the following family types are defined as living in relative poverty if their income before housing costs is below:

Household type	Household Income
Single parent with two children (under 14)	£291 per week
Couple with two children (under 14)	£381 per week

Fig 1: DWP Households Below Average Income 2013/14

3. Why we need a child poverty plan

Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child's development and future life chances. Children from low income households are less likely to achieve their academic potential and secure employment as adults. They are more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments.

The perpetuating cycle of poverty damages society as a whole. Improving a child's life chances can have a major positive impact on growth of the economy as a whole. But worsening child outcomes today could lead to a weaker economy in the future, as those children grow up without the necessary skills to contribute to productivity.¹

Estimates suggest that child poverty costs the UK up to £29bn a year through extra spending on benefits and lost tax revenue, increased spending on services to deal with consequences of child poverty, and lost earnings of individuals.²

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission predicted that even in very optimistic scenarios, more than one in five children (21%) will be in absolute poverty in 2020, compared to 17% in 2010/11. This would mark the end of the first decade since records began where there has been no reduction in the rate of absolute poverty.³

Liverpool City Region context

Liverpool City Region local authorities have a strong track record of working together in partnership on shared strategic priorities. The Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission was set up in 2011 to adopt a joint approach to tackle the cross-border drivers of child poverty and ensure joined up effort between local authorities and other partner agencies.

The Commission has established a long-term child poverty and life chances framework and this was refreshed in 2015 to reflect shorter term priorities covering the period between 2015 and 2018. At the same time the City Region Leaders and Mayor reaffirmed their commitment to the child poverty agenda in 2015, recognising that failure to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty will mean many children growing up in poverty today will become parents of children in poverty tomorrow.

Scope of this plan

This plan will act as the local delivery mechanism in Knowsley for the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy.

¹ Save the Children (2014). A fair start for every child – why we must act now to tackle child poverty in the UK.

² Hirsch, D (2013). An Estimate of the Cost of Child Poverty in 2013.

³ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014). Understanding the parental employment scenarios necessary to meet the 2020 Child Poverty Targets.

There are many services currently being delivered across the borough that have a positive impact on the drivers and symptoms of child poverty. This child poverty plan does not attempt to replicate any work already under way but instead brings together the range of activities already undertaken across the borough in connection to the five child poverty priorities.

The plan aims to ensure that a common child poverty vision is reflected in all other relevant strategies for the borough. Therefore the plan has dependencies on other key strategies and plans to ensure that child poverty is considered at all stages of service delivery.

Legislative context

Under the Child Poverty Act 2010 local authorities are required to produce a local child poverty plan, and named local partners are required to work together to reduce child poverty. At the time of writing, the Welfare Reform and Work Bill is being taken through parliament, and if enacted will remove all local child poverty duties.

Our commitment to tackle poverty is well established, and the importance of the issue means we will continue to adopt a distinct approach even in the absence of a legislative framework.

The Public Health Outcomes Framework sets out child poverty reduction as a local outcome measure. This means that local authorities and health services are required to work together to address child poverty.

Policy context

Ending child poverty continues to receive national cross party support, though the different parties propose alternative approaches to achieve this. Since the outcome of the General Election in 2015 there has been a clear Government shift in focus towards worklessness as a key determinant of child poverty. However evidence and research on the subject suggests that the causes of child poverty extend far beyond than this narrow focus, particularly when taking into account that around 64% of all children in poverty in the UK live in a working family⁴.

The Spending Review in 2015 indicates that austerity measures will continue over the next five years as the public sector is radically re-shaped and scaled back.

This makes it more important than ever that we continue to adopt a pro-active local approach to address the multiple dimensions of child poverty.

The [Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy \(2015-18\)](#) contains a full summary of the national policy context that influences our approach.

⁴ DWP (2015). Households below average income 2013/14.

4. Local context

Partnership approach

The Knowsley Partnership draws together the Council with other organisations including Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group, Knowsley Community College, the fire and Rescue Service, Police, First Ark and Knowsley Chamber of Commerce.

As a partnership we recognise the importance that tackling child poverty has on improving the life chances of children, and ensuring that future generations can thrive into adulthood and make a positive economic and social contribution to the borough.

The partnership has adopted four overarching priorities for the borough and one of those priorities is to ensure a 'child and family centred approach'. Tackling child and family poverty represents a key element of this.

Co-operative principles

Co-operative principles are an integral part of the Knowsley Partnership's approach and provide the foundation for service delivery. Our child poverty approach is designed to recognise the value of partners working together to enable families to get out of poverty, into work and do more for themselves. The Knowsley Partnership's co-operative principles are:

- Empowering residents to take an active role in their communities.
- Partnership and Co-operation.
- Building Social Value.
- Community Leadership
- Retaining jobs and investment locally.

Strategy for Knowsley

The 'Strategy for Knowsley' is the overarching plan for Knowsley, and sets out a vision to make it the 'Borough of Choice'. The child and family poverty plan supports the strategy's vision and contributes towards its three goals for the borough.

This child and family poverty plan fits in within the key strategic framework for Knowsley and brings together aims of key strategies and plans for the borough. The aim is to set out a common vision for tackling child poverty across Knowsley, and embed the vision in key strategies and plans; bringing together the range of existing actions under one 'umbrella', and showcasing our strategic commitment towards tackling child poverty.

There is a need for the Knowsley Partnership to ensure that child and family poverty continues to be embedded within those local strategies and plans.

Strategy for Knowsley: 'The Borough of Choice'

Three goals

Healthy, safe and financially secure residents | A thriving, diverse economy
Attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods, towns and green spaces

Key plans

- Council Corporate Plan 2015-19
- Economic Growth Plan 2016-21
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16
- Health improvement strategy and plans
- Education Improvement Strategy 2013-16
- Early Help System Strategy for improvement 2014-15
- Housing Strategy 2015-20
- Homelessness Strategy 2015-15
- Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-14
- Financial Inclusion Strategy 2013-15
- Green Spaces Strategy 2015-20
- Local Plan 2010-28
- Local Transport Plan 3

Knowsley Child and Family Poverty Plan 2015-18

Fair employment | Birth and school readiness | School interventions, Pupil Premium and NEETs
Health inequalities | Transport and accessibility

Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy (2015-18)

Our approach

We will continue to adopt a strategic approach to child poverty across the borough, and make sure that reduction of its effects remains a key priority within local strategies and plans. The collective action set out in those plans and strategies represents our overall approach to child poverty.

Knowsley's [Child and Family Poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment report](#) highlights a number of pressing child poverty issues that are currently faced in Knowsley. The evidence shows that Knowsley's child poverty needs are matched with the five priorities that the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission have set for the next three years. We will adopt the same five priorities for the next three years to achieve maximum effectiveness within Knowsley. Further contextual information on evidence relating to these priority areas can be found in the [Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy \(2015-18\)](#).

Priority 1: Fair employment

What we know

Parental employment has traditionally been viewed as one of the best routes out of poverty. Not only does being in sustainable and well paid employment provide families with the financial means to move out of poverty, but it can also contribute towards positive health, build resilience and social networks.

A higher proportion of working age residents in Knowsley receive some kind of out of work benefit compared with the rest of the country (17.6% compared to 9.7% respectively). The drivers behind this are diverse and multifaceted, but are influenced by lower skill levels across the borough. There remains a skills gap in Knowsley with around 15% of working age residents having no qualifications at all, compared with 9% across the country.

Single parents are particularly susceptible to unemployment with 49% of single parent households in Knowsley not in employment. Children in single parent families are nearly twice as likely to live in poverty as children in couple families. In Knowsley 78% of children in poverty live in a single parent family.

Access to affordable childcare is crucial to enable parents to enter employment, or increase their hours of work. Government policy to extend the availability of funded early years provision and increase the number of hours of funded childcare for working parents will place new demands on the local childcare market. This means that there is a strong need to make sure that the local childcare market is able to adequately respond to new demands.

However, research suggests that work in itself may not offer a complete solution to poverty. Employment levels are improving both nationally and within Knowsley, but wages have failed to keep up with the cost of living and there are increasing concerns around the quality and sustainability of some of the jobs.

Currently two-thirds of all children in poverty in the UK live in a working household. National evidence and local insight suggests that 'in-work' poverty is growing. In Knowsley, the proportion of children in poverty that live in working families is estimated to be lower at around 38%, mainly due to higher than average levels of unemployment in the borough.⁵

Median earnings of residents in Knowsley are £43 per week lower than the national average and have fallen in real terms by -12.7% since 2010, while part time earnings have fallen by -6.5% in the same period. The fall in part time wages is a particular issue in Knowsley as there are a growing proportion of residents working part-time.

⁵ DWP (2015) Households Below Average Income 1994/95 – 2013/14.

Mothers with children are more likely to be in part-time employment with around 43% of all employed females working part-time hours.

The prevalence of low pay has been increasing in recent years, with one in five employees across the country now classified as low paid. At least one in five residents in Knowsley was earning less than the UK Living Wage of £7.85 per hour in 2014.⁶

What people have told us

Feedback from residents tells us that a number of barriers can affect parents' ability to enter or progress in employment. Lack of qualifications, IT and basic literacy/numeracy skills can be a major barrier to people getting into work, especially for those with disabilities. There can also be an inherent lack of confidence amongst people who have been out of work for long periods, such as parents with older children. Childcare for working parents is considered increasingly expensive and prohibits opportunities to work and increase family income.

Fair terms and conditions for employees is also highlighted as an issue - such as a lack of Human Resource facilities, potential misuse of zero hour contracts, and businesses not allowing staff time to attend medical appointments or failure to provide sickness pay. The Living Wage has been identified as a major issue amongst some young people, with a belief that everyone aged over 16 should be paid at least a Living Wage.

What we will do

- Knowsley Council became a Living Wage employer from October 2015 and will encourage and support other employers in Knowsley to pay a Living Wage.
- Reflect the local dimension through an enhanced social value approach within the Council's procurement plan.
- Implement a refreshed business-led Economic Growth Plan for the borough to promote high quality employment alongside broader economic growth goals.
- Ensure residents have the right type and level of skills to take advantage of growth opportunities.
- Deliver 100 subsidised apprenticeship places through the Knowsley Apprenticeship Programme.
- Secure sufficient and sustainable early years and childcare provision; which is of high quality, accessible and affordable to meet demand.
- Provide a high quality, integrated Childcare and Family Information Service to assist parents and carers to secure an early years and childcare place for their child and access benefits to help with childcare fees.

⁶ ONS (2014) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

- Identify residents through the Healthy Homes programme who face barriers to employment and will benefit most from referral to the Knowsley Works service for employment advice.
- Provide targeted employment and advice and services to families, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and Knowsley Works, First Ark and community organisations.
- Offer accredited qualifications through the Family and Community Education service and Family Learning Service to enable adults to gain qualifications and progress to other learning, gain employment or enhance career progression.
- Deliver employment brokerage services through Knowsley Works, matching local business recruitment needs with residents' aspirations.
- Develop a refreshed Financial Inclusion Strategy that will tackle indebtedness as a barrier to employment, and build financial capabilities of low paid or underemployed residents.

What will success look like?

- Barriers to good quality and sustainable employment will be removed.
- Parents will be able to progress in the workplace.

Key delivery plans

- Economic Growth Plan 2016-21 (in development)
- Financial Inclusion Strategy 2012-15 (refresh in development)
- Education Improvement Strategy 2013-16

Priority 2: Birth and school readiness

What we know

The Foundation Years (from pregnancy to age 5) are a time of rapid development and experiences during this age can have a major impact on future life chances.⁷

A good start from conception and a healthy pregnancy can improve a child's life chances. However managing on a low income can have a negative impact on maternal health and readiness for mothers to give birth.

Mental illness is one of the biggest health risks in pregnancy⁸. Rates of depression and anxiety are almost twice as high during pregnancy than before, increasing to 21/2 times the pre-pregnancy rate in the baby's first year.⁹ Poverty and low income is major risk factor for this.

Of the children born in Knowsley between 2011-2013, 7.7% were born with low birth weight, which is marginally higher than the national average of 7.4%. Risk factors that can increase the chances of a baby having a low weight include smoking, alcohol use, social deprivation and low income. The proportion of pregnant women smoking at the time of delivery within Knowsley is significantly higher than the average for England at 20.6% at 2013/14 compared with 12%.

Many teenage pregnancies are unplanned, and babies born to teenage mothers have been shown to experience poorer health outcomes than babies born to mothers aged 20-39. As of 2013 there were 32.1 teen conceptions (aged 15-17) per 1,000 girls in Knowsley compared with 24.3 per 1,000 in England.

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed a baby and gives them the best start in life. As of 2013/14, 44.9% of new mothers initiated breastfeeding at birth in Knowsley. This is significantly lower than the national average of 74%. Only 19.9% of those mothers who initiated breastfeeding at birth continued at 6 to 8 weeks, compared to the national average of 45.8%. Breastfeeding rates remain consistently below the levels of England and the rest of the North West.

By the time children start school in Knowsley, 60.3% were considered to be at a 'good level of development' under the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in 2015, which is below the average across all of England of 66.3%. The level has increased in Knowsley from 55.4% in 2013, but there was been a higher level of improvement across England as a whole from 51.7% in 2013.

⁷ Field F (2010). The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults, London: Cabinet Office.

⁸ The Guardian Health Professionals Network (2014). Why are Maternal Mental Health Services Failing women?

⁹ World Health Organisation (2014). Mental Health, Maternal and Child Mental Health.

Low income has a major impact on children's development during their early years, and just 50% of children who are eligible for free school meals achieved a 'good level of development' in 2014 compared with 65% of all other children. However this gap in children's development is smaller than the average for England of 19% points.

Take up of the funded early education offer is very high in Knowsley and 98% of 3 and 4 year olds took up a place in 2015 compared with 96% across all of England. Similarly 68% of eligible 2 year olds took up a place in 2015 compared with 58% across England.

The majority (84%) of 3 and 4 year olds in Knowsley attend early years settings that are school nursery or infant classes. All of these settings that have been judged by Ofsted have achieved a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating for early years provision. This means a higher than average proportion of 3 and 4 year old children in Knowsley attend early education settings rated 'good' or 'outstanding' at 92% compared with 85% nationally.

What people have told us

Feedback from residents tells us that Children's Centres provide parents with positive personal experiences and the opportunity to build friendships and support networks, reducing the isolation sometimes felt by new mothers.

There can be an ongoing level of fear and distrust of local services amongst families from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This means there can be variations in the extent that people want to engage with Children's Centres, but are generally viewed as more trustworthy than private nurseries.

Information passed on by friends and family about services offered at Children's Centres is crucial in helping to build up trust. Equally the individualised approach offered by outreach workers is appreciated and projects and image less like other local public service staff, and for the motivational advice they can provide.

People are generally aware of the consequences of smoking in pregnancy and young mothers are often encouraged by their peers to give up smoking at this time. However younger people tend to believe that quitting is for another day in the future and that there wouldn't be anything to help them de-stress if they gave up. For young mothers, the influence of the family is one of the strongest factors on decisions around their child's health, for example whether to choose breastfeeding.

What we will do

- Re-focus and develop a consistent conception to age two early years service offer for families across the borough.
- Provide stop smoking support to pregnant women, their partners and other family members through the Smoke Free Families service.

- Implement a Breastfeeding Plan to improve breastfeeding initiation and continuation and refer pregnant women identified through Children's Centres to the 'Bosom Buddies' scheme.
- Roll-out (in partnership with the Liverpool Women's Hospital) Peri-natal Mental Health pilots for pregnant women who report mild to moderate levels of mental ill-health.
- Ensure multi-agency work to deliver the pathway for disadvantaged children accessing the two-year-old offer, to ensure they make good progress in their learning and development and that families receive the support they need.
- Provide targeted specialist support to those in private, voluntary or school early years settings and childcare providers to achieve 'good or above' judgements by Ofsted.
- Work with partners including healthcare providers and schools to re-configure Early Help provision and deliver the next phase of the Stronger Families programme.

What will success look like?

- Expectant mothers will be healthy and ready to give birth.
- Children from low income families will be ready to start school.
- Children from low income families will achieve the same level of social and emotional development as other children.
- All children receive high quality early years education.

Key delivery plans

- Knowsley Early Help System: strategy for improvement 2014-15
- Education Improvement Strategy 2013-16
- Teenage Pregnancy Plan
- Tobacco Plan
- Breastfeeding Plan
- Knowsley Council Children's Centres Service Plans

Priority 3: School interventions, Pupil Premium and young people who are NEET

What we know

In recent years Knowsley's pupils have performed well at Key Stage 2 with significant improvements in Key Stage 2 results between 2008 and 2012, and in 2015 80% of Knowsley children left primary school with level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths, which is equal to the national average of 80%.

69% of disadvantaged children who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths compared with 67% disadvantaged children nationally. Children not classed as disadvantaged in Knowsley (84%) also outperformed non-disadvantaged children nationally (83%) against this measure.

By the time children in Knowsley leave secondary school a much smaller proportion of children are reaching expected levels and leave with five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths (5ACEM). There have been improvements over the last few years, but Knowsley still falls significantly behind the performance of statistical neighbours and national averages.

Provisional results for 2015 show that 36.7% of pupils left a Knowsley secondary school with 5ACEM compared to the national average of 52.8%. The levels of progress pupils are making between KS2 and KS4 is lower than the national average in both English and maths.

Knowsley has a much higher proportion of secondary pupils who are eligible to claim free school meals (36.4%) compared with England as a whole (15.7%), however just 23.2% of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding achieved 5ACEM in 2014, compared with a national average of 36.7%.

Significant progress has been made in recent years in reducing the proportion of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training in Knowsley, but the rate does remain higher than the national average.

Crime and anti-social behaviour disproportionately impacts on disadvantaged communities. Research suggests that young people who live in poorer neighbourhoods are more likely to take part in criminal and anti-social acts, with children in the youth justice system predominantly drawn from the poorest and most disadvantaged families.

What people have told us

Feedback from young people tells us that while many young people in Knowsley may come from deprived backgrounds, they show significant levels of ambition in relation to education and training. Some young people have commented that schools should have a stronger focus on a 'curriculum for life' that covers topics such as finance, relationships and politics.

A significant group of young people tend to be less positive about their prospects once they reach age 14-15 and will already be disengaged, or want to leave school as soon as possible. The costs of continuing in education or training can be a major factor for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

When young people leave school, lack of flexibility in the current benefits system can dissuade them from starting apprenticeships or lower paid jobs. Employers can often choose to offer apprenticeships at 17 and 18 which can have a detrimental effect on 16 year olds' motivation to continue in education or training, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have not achieved as well as their peers at school and are disengaged with the education system.

What we will do

- Recommend that all school Governing Bodies appoint a lead Governor for Life Chances who will hold schools to account on the use of good practice approaches to targeting support for disadvantaged pupils, including monitoring use of Pupil Premium funding and supporting development of action plans to deliver improvement.
- Ensure secondary schools have high quality plans for improving outcomes for children eligible for Pupil Premium and Free School Meals.
- Analyse the performance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and Free School Meals across all schools and communicate this work to schools via existing networks.
- Introduce three area/cross phase development clusters to pilot the 'Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters' project in partnership with Wirral MBC.
- Implement an accountability framework for devolving Pupil Premium funding for Looked After Children.
- Improve provision across the secondary sector offering targeted support to those schools that 'require improvement' or are in an Ofsted category.
- Provide strategic leadership to the sector through the secondary leadership group and bring challenge to school leaders and governors through the local authority executive monitoring boards.
- Work in partnership with schools to drive improvement in attendance, through the implementation of a new attendance strategy across all schools aimed at reducing school absence.

- Provide support and challenge to schools in relation to behaviour in schools where data identifies exclusion concerns.
- Work with schools, colleges and providers to improve the quality and accessibility of careers education, information, advice, guidance and engagement services and monitor this through destination measures.
- Continue to develop links between education and businesses to improve the employability skills of Knowsley pupils.
- Work closely with Liverpool City Region colleagues to improve the quality and breadth of provision available to Knowsley's young people across their travel to learn area.

What will success look like?

- Children from low income families will have the same opportunities to achieve at school as their peers.
- Young people from low income families have the same opportunities to enter further education, employment or training when they leave school.

Key delivery plans

- Education Improvement Strategy 2013-16

Priority 4: Health inequalities and lifestyle choices

What we know

Children from lower income households are more likely to experience worse health outcomes across a range of indicators. This is a critical issue as health inequalities experiences in childhood often continue in later life, limiting children's chances of escaping poverty in adulthood.

Current lifestyle choices represent a risk to the health of the population and while there have been some improvements in lifestyle risks across the population, the greatest improvements are in higher socio-economic groups. The financial costs of some behaviours can have a significant impact on low-income households, with estimates suggesting that a low-income family of smokers will spend a quarter of their income on smoking. Smoking prevalence is high in Knowsley and as of 2012/13 almost one in three adults currently smoke (32%), which is higher than the average in Merseyside (28%) and also England (20%).

There is a growing concern that children's diets contain too much sugar, salt, saturated fat and too few vegetables. These are contributing factors to Knowsley's higher than average childhood obesity rates amongst children. In 2013/14 the proportion of children in Knowsley classified as obese in Reception year was 11.3%, and 23.5% in year six. Both are higher than seen across England on average.

Inequality in the take-up of vaccines can worsen social inequalities, but uptake of childhood immunisations at ages 1, 2 and 5 in Knowsley is higher than England.

Research suggests there are clear links between poverty and substance misuse. Local figures show that 38% of drug users who access intervention services and 59% of alcohol intervention users are living with dependent children.

Areas of high poverty tend to correlate closely with higher levels of domestic abuse. On a family level, half of all people who report domestic abuse have children. Living with domestic abuse adversely affects children's health, development, relationships, behaviour and emotional wellbeing, which has consequences for their educational attainment and future life. There are typically around 3,500 domestic abuse incidents reported in Knowsley per year.

The Healthy Child Programme is a public programme for children, young people and families which focus on early intervention and prevention. It offers a universal programme of screening tests, immunisations, developmental reviews, information and guidance on parenting and healthy choices.

Responsibility for commissioning the range of services delivering the Healthy Child Programme for children aged 0-5 (including Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership) transferred to local authorities in October 2015. Given the importance in making healthy progress during a child's early years, it is essential that the transfer of this programme is safe, effective and seamless.

What people have told us

Feedback tells us that residents from lower income households generally hold more negative views of their own health, and may not visit their GP as often as others, even when faced with symptoms of serious illnesses.

For immunisations, there is a general lack of understanding amongst mothers as to why children need to be immunised, and new mothers can be fearful of whether immunisations can harm their baby. Parental influence is one of the strongest influences over young parents' decisions around their child's health.

Preparing and eating fresh and healthy food is viewed positively, but intentions of parents to feed their children healthy foods can become strained after a child reaches the age of two, especially when it becomes harder to maintain.

What we will do

- Ensure co-ordinated planning with NHS England for safe and effective transfer and integration of children's public health services (0-5) to local authorities to create an integrated offer within Children's Centres.
- Implement health promotion campaigns, health improvement plans and programmes and services will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and the life chances of children.
- Offer targeted multi agency support to children who as part of the Health Visiting Service are identified with possible additional need at the 2 to 2 1/2 year-old review.
- Ensure that the substance misuse treatment service identifies service users with children, that family support is offered to these service users and referrals are made to appropriate partner agencies.
- Take a family approach to health services by looking at people's needs in the context of the whole family, and families with the most complex needs are offered the most help.
- Continue to develop pathways for early intervention and support within the Stronger Families programme.
- Make targeted referrals through front-line practice to the Lifestyle hub for advice in relation to alcohol, food and nutrition, physical activity, mental health and other lifestyle services.

- Provide a revised multi-agency approach to high risk victims of domestic violence in order to mitigate the risk of repeat victimisation and provide victims with a bespoke support service.
- Improve mental wellbeing and resilience in 10–16 years olds through the Headstart programme.

What will success look like?

- Health inequalities will be reduced amongst children.
- Parents make lifestyle choices that are positive towards, and does not harm their children's' health.

Key delivery plans

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Tobacco Plan
- Obesity Plan
- Alcohol Plan
- Physical Activity Plan
- Domestic Abuse Action Plan
- Public Mental Health Commissioning Plan

Priority 5: Transport and accessibility

What we know

Transport is important for people to access education, training or employment. Evidence suggests that families with low incomes who live in deprived neighbourhoods are more adversely affected by the impacts of poor transport access than others in more affluent neighbourhoods.

A combination of low income, low car ownership, and low affordability of public transport are clear contributors to social exclusion and isolation of some areas from services and opportunities. Households with a lower income are more likely to walk or use public transport when making a journey. Many of our disadvantaged neighbourhoods are characterised by low car ownership. Around 7,000 households in Knowsley that contain a dependent child do not have a car, which represents 33% of all households with children.

Disadvantaged areas suffer most from the impacts of transport with a disparity between mobility rich areas and the mobility poor who often live in our most disadvantaged areas where the costs of transport restrict ability to travel, and where some of the worst impacts of transport in relation to air quality and traffic accidents are most keenly felt.

For low income families, access to employment and services by public transport is critical in ensuring good access to services and job opportunities. Links by public transport to Liverpool from Knowsley's towns are generally good; however those in the north to south direction are generally weaker.

Whilst there is an extensive bus network within Knowsley, there are issues regarding the availability and frequency of services that provide a north-south link between Knowsley's towns and from residential areas to key employment opportunities. Public transport travel times between Knowsley's towns can be excessive, and in particular between Kirkby and Halewood. This has contributed to a decline in bus patronage over the last 20 years.

Affordability of travel is a critical issue in being able to access opportunities. The average peak bus fare in Knowsley has increased from £1.45 in 2006/07 to £2.30 in 2013/14, and increase of 59%. Between 2012 and 2015 the average cost of a return train journey to Liverpool increased by 9.5%.

Merseytravel's Transport Solutions service offers information, advice and guidance to people who are struggling to get to work by public transport and can provide additional support such as travel passes, bikes for work, and personal transport plans.

What people have told us

Feedback from residents tells us that high transport costs is a growing concern for many young people, particularly those wanting to progress onto further education or to access a school that specialises in a field that they are interested in. This is particularly relevant to young people undertaking apprenticeships who need to travel to their college and employer at different locations.

Transport accessibility can also be a key obstacle in accessing employment sites and services, and in particular a north/south between townships in the borough. For example some businesses and residents have reported that staff have difficulty in making it into work on time to start 6am shifts due to a lack of sufficient public transport or cancelled and delayed buses, particularly within business and industrial parks. Feedback suggests that there is a general problem in relation to availability, timing, capacity and reliability of bus services, and there may be pockets of exclusion in some parts of the borough.

What we will do

- Promote Merseytravel's 'My ticket' all day bus travel ticket amongst young people and parents in Knowsley.
- Work with Merseytravel to support introducing of further bus Quality Partnership Schemes on key routes within Knowsley.
- Provide local authority travel support for applicants that meet the statutory eligibility criteria and target limited funds for local authority discretionary travel support at residents with the greatest needs, including children and young people accessing educational opportunities.
- Provide Road Safety Education to all school age pupils and adults, where appropriate, in relation to walking, cycling, motor cycle use, driving and driver behaviour.
- Support Merseytravel in developing Smarter Choices marketing targeted at disadvantaged communities in conjunction with health, education and environment sectors.
- Work with Merseytravel to continue developing an innovative programme to provide personalised travel planning to a greater amount of people.
- Promote walking and cycling modes to all. This will include training for children as pedestrians and as cyclists.
- Work with Merseytravel to provide cycles to those on low incomes whenever possible to expand travel horizons of disadvantaged groups.
- Agree a local accident prevention plan and implement a series of engineering measures, with the aim of reducing traffic collisions around schools.
- Improve links between walking and cycling infrastructure where possible.

What will success look like?

- Children from low income families have the same opportunities as all children to access key services.
- Low income families are able to access employment, training and social opportunities.

Key delivery plans

- The Third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside
- Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS7: Transport Networks
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Plan for Growth
- Transport Access Plan
- Sustainable Travel Strategy
- Merseyside Active Travel Strategy
- Merseyside Cycling Strategy
- Knowsley Cycling Plan

4. Delivering and monitoring the plan

Delivery

The Knowsley Partnership's Strategic Board will act as the overarching coordinating body of the child and family poverty plan, and will oversee delivery.

Given its statutory responsibilities at the time of writing, the Council will act as lead agency in delivering the plan, but success will ultimately be dependent on continuous support of all partners.

Monitoring

A child poverty dashboard will be developed to monitor the key drivers of child poverty and our five priorities, and will be updated and presented to the Strategic Board annually to highlight broad progress related to this plan.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Knowsley will also provide ongoing monitoring of local child and family poverty. It involves a rolling programme of research, analysis and consultation to produce reports on 37 topics - many of which include or are closely related to determinants of child and family poverty. Ongoing updates to the JSNA will provide a view as to how child and family poverty is improving.

Evaluation

Evaluation of this plan will be conducted in 2018 through a fresh assessment of child and family poverty needs and additional qualitative insight into how actions set out in this plan have had an impact on people's lives.

The evaluation will determine if interventions have been successful in helping families to escape poverty, if investment made has led to wider savings, and whether there is a case to widen the scope of intervention work.

Delivery will be dependent on the success of other strategies and programmes, and evaluation will incorporate performance monitoring and evaluation of those individual strategies and programmes. For example the ongoing comprehensive evaluation of the Stronger Families and Healthy Homes programmes, and the Council's performance management framework.

Findings from monitoring and evaluation will be fed up to the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission to inform their ongoing role in overseeing the City Region child poverty framework.